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JAMES BAY PHASE 2-THEY'RE BACK

It was with shock, outrage and anger that I learnt of the latest chapter to the James Bay II saga. I, and the many others, who fought Great Whale (a.k.a. James Bay Phase II) felt the same. We awakened to yet another Friday the 13th part 8 movie where the evil rises again and again. I had the urge to "cry havoc and let loose the dogs of war."

The battle against Hydro-Quebec had been won, or so we thought. Parizeau said it had been indefinitely shelved less than a year and a half ago.

Celebrating at that time, we had our swords beaten into plowshares and we settled down to a well deserved rest. A megacorp had been brought to its knees by good common people. Cree, Canadian, Quebecois, American or European — it didn't matter because we all participated in one of the greatest non-violent victories known to North America. It is now clear we had underestimated the tenacity of the enemy. How could we have gotten so complacent?

When the heat of my anger settled I began to look at what was going on.

First the Montreal paper *Le Devoir* comes out with a story on Hydro-Quebec's latest brainchild. They plan to divert four rivers on Innu land. Then *The Nation* found out they also want to divert the Great Whale and Ruperts Rivers. Why? Because reservoir levels aren't high enough. Why? Because they have been selling power to the US market at below the cost of production, so the Americans have been buying more and more. Why not? They aren't fools, if someone is selling you something this cheap, you are going to buy, it's just economics. In order to sell the "surplus" power to the US, Hydro-Quebec scarified its water levels in the reservoir, draining them to dangerously low levels. Now they say they need more water and that they will look at diverting more rivers into existing systems. Of course this is to supply domestic needs in Quebec. Are we supposed to believe that it is just chance that their sales to the US has tripled since 1990? (See story page 5).

Enter some secretive meetings the Chief of Great Whale seems to have been kept in the dark about. He's upset and hoping that deals aren't being made behind his back.

Sounds a little paranoid, until you hear that other Chiefs knew about it, but not the guy from one of the rivers on the sales block. See story page 5 for more details.

Then the spin doctors come out preaching the news stories are premature. Hydro says its just planning to study the diversions. The stance from the Quebec government and Hydro is "Relax, we're just talking. It's only a study!!"

Personally I have problems with a study. Like wouldn't it be a good idea to see if you even need one? If indeed Cree consent is really needed, or will be respected wouldn't it be a good idea to find out if you were going to get that consent first? Could save the taxpayers,... er Hydro-Quebec a lot of money.

Everyone I talked to, both in and outside of Canada, all say that we would like to stop this latest plan from Hydro-Quebec before it even gets started.

The word is traveling throughout the land. All those who fought Great Whale to a standstill don't want another fight because we are tired of the war. But we are awakening and readying ourselves for battle once more. The feelings that I, and others, had back in the days of fighting James Bay Phase II have not died. The networks and people that were in place for that first fight are reconnecting and organizing even as you read this editorial.

You will notice the news stories and articles are all signed "by Nation Staff." This is because all of us at *the Nation* are working on them and will continue to bring you the latest information, news and updates as they become available. We know that this is of grave importance to the Cree Nation as a whole.

The Grand Council/CRA Annual General Assembly is on August 13. I am sure this will be on the agenda and as in the past years the Cree people will continue to insist on controlling their own destiny. I know we can count all Crees to support the people of Whapmagoustui, Waskaganish, Nemaska and any other Crees, who would be affected by this new version of James Bay Phase II, in their time of need.

by Will Nicholls

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COVER PHOTO:

Cover design: Katerina Cizek



I HAD A DREAM...

Neil was on the road, so this issue we bring you a story from Margaret Orr. -Ed.

One day, before an exam, I had a dream where my Elders asked me, when I returned home, "What did you learn while being away at school?" In school we learn what is expected of us, sometimes more. What we learn outside of school is often the unexpected. Like, during my road trip home for the summer holidays, we stopped to visit a friend in Michigan and took a walk in the city park. Inside a large pen there were some tame deer, comfortable where they were. What I found that turned my stomach and broke my heart was a large black bear caged in an 18' x 18' pen. The bear was suffering. His eyes were glazed over. He caught my eyes for a while then looked away and groaned. He was huge, too fat for lack of space and too much food. Surrounding him were containers that his audience threw over the fence at him, their left-over fast foods. Out of boredom he had also chewed on the garbage.

On the way back from our walk I checked up on the bear. He was walking and groaning in pain, unable to find any shady breeze from the heat. He caught my gaze and looked as if he wanted to say something. Another onlooker said that she often comes to see him and feels helpless to do anything about it, and people are always throwing their garbage at him, making him sick and the caretakers do not do anything to improve his home. She also gave a history on how the bear got there.

As a cub, the bear was rescued by fire-fighters and placed in the park. He's never really known any freedom and depends on the city to feed him. When they want to clean his cage they just stuff him into his house and close the door. Suffering from lack of minerals, he chews on his own excrement as any neglected caged animal will do. Remembering words of an Elder who said to speak to a bear if you meet it in the woods, that is what I did, out of respect.

Now, reflecting on the misfortune of the bear, I see all around me our people forced off their land and supposedly rescued by guilt-ridden governments and Hydro-Quebec, suffering the same conditions as the bear, minus the excrement. Now our Native peoples are living a life unfamiliar to most peoples who had enjoyed freedom before the industrial fires destroyed their land and their lives. Along with the new life comes the garbage, unknowingly consumed by the old and the new.

A rapidly encroaching technological culture must be learned. So must a new lifestyle that can learn how to filter out impurities, cleverly control luxuries and diabetic garbage. Exercise, creativity, diet, culture, education, anything that's good for good living can be provided for the bear. It will be free to create a life of its own and maybe for others, learning self-respect and dignity.

So this is a lesson that life taught me in the most unexpected way, and the lasting impact it had on me.

Margaret Orr

the Nation

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JAMES BAY II BACK ON THE TABLE

Hydro-Quebec is reviving the dreaded James Bay II project.

At the moment it's still at the discussion stage and details are sketchy. But we do know the utility's new plan would divert the Great Whale and Rupert rivers into existing hydro-electric projects through a series of canals. The proposal would reduce the flow of the two rivers to a mere trickle.

The plan was presented to Cree leaders in two secretive meetings last week in Montreal and Quebec City. It's been 17 months since Premier Jacques Parizeau shelved the original Great Whale proposal after a six-year Cree international protest campaign.

Officials in Whapmagoostui were shocked when they heard talk of the plans at a chiefs' meeting in Montreal on June 4.

"It will have the same impact as if the river is dammed. It's going to be very difficult for the people to accept. It may turn out to be another battle for the Cree Nation," said David Mast, executive director of the Whapmagoostui First Nation.

Asked if Crees could ever agree to the project in exchange for compensation, Mast said, "I think people sent out a very strong message on that already that they don't want the money, that they want to practice our traditional way of life."

It seems the project would divert the Great Whale River at its headwater, Lac Bienville. The river's flow would be greatly reduced downstream. The water would be diverted through over 10 km of canals into the existing La Grande complex.

Also under the plan, the Rupert River would be redirected northwards to the Eastmain and La Grande complexes, at least 20 km away.

The plan could see a large new reservoir near Nemaska. The diversions would leave the mouths of the Great Whale and Rupert filled with salt water. This would deprive Whapmagoostui and Waskaganish of their sources of drinking water.

Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come met with Hydro president Andre Caille to discuss the diversions on June 5 in Montreal. The next day, Resources Minister Guy Chevrette met with Chief Billy Diamond.

Chief Matthew Mukash spoke briefly about the project but said he would have to give his complete reaction later because the community was preoccupied with a tragic accident that took the life of a young man. Mukash said he was not told about the Cree meetings with HQ. "It looks like Hydro-Quebec is trying to make a deal with the Crees," he said. He hoped no deals would be made behind anyone's back.

Chief Charles Bobbish of Chisasibi said he was "surprised" when news leaked out about Hydro's plans. Bobbish would not give his opinion of the new HQ plan: "I would have to hear it from my people first. If my people say go for it, I say go for it." But he did say there is a lack of information about what is going on. "Nobody seems to tell us what is supposed to happen."

Hydro spokesman Steve Flanagan said no final decision has been made on whether the plan will go ahead. Studies are continuing. A spokeswoman for Chevrette at first denied knowing about any meetings with the Crees, but later confirmed that two meetings had taken place. She said Hydro can't go ahead on any project without the government's approval. More Cree reaction, p. 9.

by Nation staff

HYDRO EXPORTS TRIPLED SINCE 1990

Hydro's desire to export power to the U.S. and years of management mistakes are what's behind the utility's plan to revive James Bay II, says a leading U.S. energy analyst.

"It seems Quebec took a big gamble and ended up losing," said Ian Goodman, of the Boston-based Goodman Group.

Hydro has been selling ever increasing amounts of power to New York State and New England. Now, it's desperate for more water to replenish its reservoirs, which are at dangerously low levels.

"Hydro-Quebec appears to have oversold the province's energy and they did so at less than what it costs to produce it," said Goodman, who has worked as a consultant for the Crees.

Hydro's exports to the United States have nearly tripled since 1990, according to figures from the National Energy Board. Quebec exported 5 terrawatt hours (twh) of power in 1990, almost all to the U.S. This rose to 17 twh in 1995 and fell somewhat to 13.9 twh last year.

Internal Hydro Quebec documents reveal that Quebec's reservoirs have fallen to 21 per cent of total capacity, according to a report in *Le Devoir*. Even as water levels fell, Hydro kept boosting its exports, said the newspaper.

Ironically, Quebec will now probably be forced to import energy from its neighbours in order to make it through next winter, said Goodman. Hydro will have to pay far more for this energy than the price it charged itself, Goodman said.

"When Hydro Quebec makes a mistake, the Quebec people pay one way or another, either in higher rates or taxes."

A battle appears to be brewing within the Quebec government over four other river diversions announced in the Innu territory. Quebec Environment Minister David Cliche said any new hydro projects would be subjected to the same environmental review as any other developer.

But Guy Chevrette, minister in charge of Hydro-Quebec, said deregulation in the energy industry means information about water levels in reservoirs can't be made public because it would put Hydro at a commercial disadvantage.

The Nation has filed an Access-to-Information request for details about reservoir levels and the Great Whale and Rupert diversion plan. -by Nation staff

NDP APOLOGIZES TO GAZETTE

Letter to *The Nation*.

*The following letter is addressed to
The Montreal Gazette.*

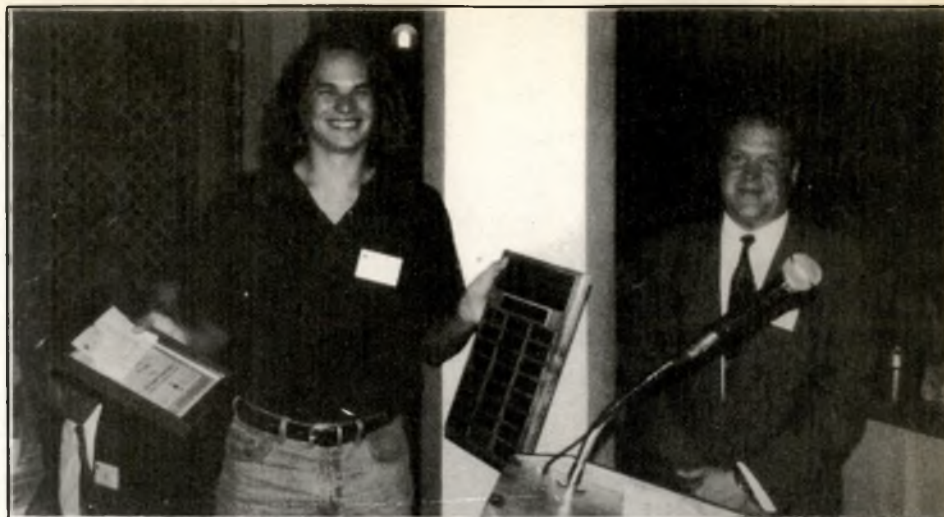
I regret that we were misinformed about The Gazette's policy of news coverage. I feel that it was important to bring to your attention this error in communications between myself and a member of our federal staff. I assure you that there was no malicious intent on my behalf.

As a federalist francophone, I have always found the role of the only English Language Daily in Montreal essential in the overall political context. The respected journalists of your paper are always conscientious and effective and take their responsibilities seriously.

I hope that this mishap will in no way offend the editors of The Gazette. Thank you for your understanding in this matter.

**Eric Lanteigne, Communications
Director, Quebec Region, NDP**

*Ed. Note: The May 23 issue of The
Nation included a satirical article entitled*



Alex Roslin with Q.C.N.A. President Bob Philips

"Indecision '97." At the end of the article, Eric Lanteigne of the NDP said that many Quebec newspapers print favourable stories about politicians only if the politicians buy advertising. He especially singled out The Montreal Gazette. After The Nation's article appeared, The Gazette responded by sending us a letter vehemently denying the accusation.

Afterwards, Mr. Lanteigne learned that he had been misinformed about The Gazette and wrote the letter printed above. We would like readers to be aware that Mr. Lanteigne has apologized to The Gazette and The Nation for making his false remarks and has withdrawn them without reservation. We hope this clarifies any confusion that may have resulted.



Congratulations
to all our graduates
and best wishes
for your continued success
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and all employees
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have completed this milestone
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move towards a successful
and bright future.

From Chief Abel Bosum and
the Ouje Bougoumou Cree Nation

NATION WIN AWARDS

The War whoops reverberated with the intensity of finger nails scratching a blackboard. The notorious *nation* crowd had gathered. Neil was m.i.a. so Erland "How do you focus this?" Campbell was his stand in. On June 6th The Quebec Community Newspaper association held their convention. The Nation was up for four awards for 1996. Will Nicholls walked away from the podium as the winner for *best general editorial*. Alex Roslin was honoured with the *Paul Dumont - Frenette Award* "for best overall journalistic performance for the year 1996." Also on the menu for Alex was 1st place for *Best investigative/ in- depth reporting*. To cap it off Alex won for *best news story*. Rhonda thinks he should have gotten a prize for his co-ordination of plaids. Our sister publication out of Kahnawake, The *Eastern Door's* Titi (Conway Jocks) won *Best editorial cartoon*. A good time was had by all.

NATIVE VOTE WINS ABITIBI REGION

Election time has come and gone and by now people know that the Liberals retained power by a slim majority. The new Member of Parliament for the Abitibi region is Liberal candidate Guy St-Julien. He defeated the incumbent BLOC candidate by 2,643 votes.

An interesting aspect of this is that 4,470 Natives voted. Of those 3,380 voted for the Liberal candidate. That means the Native vote made the difference in winning or losing the Abitibi region. It should be interesting to see if Guy St-Julien's action in parliament reflect the trust that Native people in the Abitibi region put in him.

The Liberals got 16,779 votes followed by the BLOC with 14,166. Third place went to the revived Progressive Conservative Party with 6,529 votes and the NDP walked away with a pitiful 912 votes. Only 1,450 ballots were rejected.

Nunavik and Cree voters gave the Liberals the 3,388 votes mentioned above, the BLOC recieved 569, the PC took 513 and the NDP recieved almost half of their total for the Abitibi region with 449 votes.

Absent this year were Rhinosaurs Party. This is the first election that the new \$1000 deposit per candidate was in force. Past federal elections only required a \$250 deposit.



This forest fire passed within 20-5 km of Nemaska last week.

FOREST FIRES WORSE THAN USUAL THIS YEAR

It was supposed to be a relaxing fishing trip for some Waswanipi trappers.

Suddenly, lightning hit a stand of trees just outside town. It didn't take long for the dry trees to light up into a blaze, just a few kilometres away from the community's new sawmill!

To make matters worse, another forest fire was raging not far away. And the wind was blowing both fires ever-closer to the sawmill. There was no time to lose.

Air power was called in. As water-bombers pounded the fire from above, the would-be fishers and volunteers from Waswanipi moved in with water pumps. When the fires were put out, they were six kilometres away from the sawmill.

A close brush with disaster just days before the grand opening of the sawmill, to be attended by Premier Lucien Bouchard.

"People were nervous," said Paul Dixon, one of the first trapper/firefighters on the scene.

Dozens of fires blazed across Iiyuuuschii last week, 95 per cent caused by lightning. The largest was in the Nemaska area and came within 20 to 25 km of the community. It wasn't considered a threat because it was South-East of town and NW winds were pushing it further away. Rain also tamed the fire a little.

Forest fires this year have been worse than average. Since April, 82 forest fires have been reported this year in the southern half of James Bay. About 6,500 hectares of forest were destroyed. Last year in the same period, 48 fires destroyed 4,036 hectares. The average in the last five years is 52 fires and 1,419 hectares.

Dozens of fires fanned by high winds prompted the Resources Ministry to issue an alert on Tuesday afternoon, June 10.

Forestry operations and travel on logging roads were prohibited until further notice in an area stretching from Desmaraisville to Chibougamau, up to Lac Albanel, over to the 51th parallel and back to the Ontario border.

Highways remain open unless the situation deteriorates.

Reports are coming in that several Cree bush camps were destroyed by fire, including one near Ouje-Bougoumou and one near Matagami. No one was hurt since most Crees are in their communities following goose break.

Over in Waswanipi, the community again looked disaster in the face just one day after the close call at the sawmill.

A massive new forest fire had gotten underway, this time to the west of the community, and it was headed right for town!

Paul, our roving forest fire correspondent, got a close-up look at the blaze and reported seeing a wall of flames shooting 200 feet into the air. The fire was 10 km long and 4 km wide.

A thick canopy of black smoke hung high over Waswanipi on Tuesday. The community was put on alert and evacuation plans were readied for 200 people with asthma and those who would accompany them (many are children).

The fire was 20 km away when the wind miraculously shifted and it started heading south. A second close call. The blaze would bypass Waswanipi by about 15 km.

by Alex Roslin

Op · por · tu · ni · ty

n, 1 : a favourable combination of circumstances, time and place. *2* : a chance for advancement or progress.

To the graduating classes of 1997, *the Nation* salutes you. Only you can create opportunity.



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DISCUSSION ABOUT HQ PLANS "PREMATURE": BILLY DIAMOND

Chief Billy Diamond met with Resources Minister Guy Chevrette June 6 to discuss the possible diversion of the Great Whale and Rupert rivers. Will Nicholls interviewed him to get more details about HQ's plans.

The Nation: I'm calling to discuss HQ's new plans...

Chief Billy Diamond: I've checked out the information with Chevrette. There's a problem with the water levels (see story, p. 5). The water-levels issue was one of those issues never settled in the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. The Crees have always claimed that the water levels were not sufficient. Now it's coming to pass. It's becoming an issue. It's not only water levels for the La Grande complex but all hydro-electric installations in Quebec.

The government of Quebec has issued a decree asking for studies on the water levels. The government has also said to Hydro-Quebec that they did not have the authority to make any decisions, that they are being given the authority to do studies only. These studies are going to take some time and then based on the studies the government will take the decision, not Hydro-Quebec. The government will take the decision. Before they take the decision they will consult the Crees.

On the La Grande Complex in 1975, I'm referring to the Agreement, there's a technical description of the complex in Section 8 of the Agreement. Based on that they need Cree consent. Cree consent is very clear on the issue. Following that, the government will consult with the Crees.

Based on that, the information that was in the newspaper (the June 7 edition of *The Montreal Gazette* -Ed.) was premature. They said any discussion without having the studies right now would be premature. They would ask that we would all wait for the studies to see what happens.

What time frame are we talking about?

I have no idea on that. That information I don't have.

We were wondering about a lot of this with all the rumours walking around.

Yes, apparently there's a group of engineers and also an organization of construction firms that are lobbying and pushing for some kind of projects to be initiated in Quebec. These studies included not only La Grande. They also include others.



The Quebec cabinet has been advised of the issue of the water levels but the only decision, according to Chevrette, is to do studies on the water levels. No project has been authorized.

The other issue is now anybody who produces electricity can use Hydro-Quebec's transmission lines. So that brings the price of electricity down. And when the price of electricity goes down, the consumer gets very interested and wants to renegotiate contracts.

And the Crees may want to renegotiate themselves?

Well, that will probably come about if there are changes to Section 8 (*technical description of the La Grande Complex changed to add other river diversions* -Ed.). Changes to Section 8 of the JBNQA require Cree consent and that requires negotiations with the Crees. It's very clear and Chevrette understands that.

Do you see the fight for Great Whale or the Rupert in the same form as the last time?

It'll be a different fight. It'll be about water rights. This is a water-rights issue. The use of Lake Bienville as a reservoir and even the upper Rupert.

We're talking about the R-11 trapline. This is east of the Route-du-Nord. It's between Nemaska and Mistissini. Now we know why the Route-du-Nord was built.

So you think part of the reason was for these projects?

Absolutely. Basically that's the story as I know it. That's what I have. Basically it's going to take two or three years before anything is going to happen on this water-level issue. If they speed it up it may be in the year. We'll wait for the studies.

One of the things Chevrette said is with any work on these studies, HQ is obligated to go through the environmental and social-assessment process. So the studies can be caught by the Crees because we have representatives sitting on the various committees. So that's the place to watch.

U.S. ACTIVISTS PLEDGE SUPPORT

David Miller is an executive director for the National Audubon Society. He says his organization's policy on Great Whale is still in force. "We remain concerned about Cree culture, the wildlife and the eco-system in the James Bay," he told us. "It seems bad ideas don't go away. They just wait for another day. I hope that we can nip this latest one in the bud before it goes too far."

Managing editor Jeff Jones of the Albany, NY-based *Green Sheet* bulletin says an alert is going out to all the U.S. environmental activists. His July issue, due at the end of the month, will be carrying a story alerting interested parties about HQ's new plans.

Doris Delany and Shelly Cath, two other prominent U.S. environmentalists, both say the old network is still there and people are not about to let the James Bay II issue drop.



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For more information, please contact Thomas Jolly at (819) 673-2512.



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your future endeavours!**

From Chief William Mianacum, Council, Staff, Elders & Members



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Your hard work and dedication to the successful completion of your school year has brought pride to us all. It is with hope and confidence in your skills, knowledge and abilities that we look forward to supporting your continued dreams for a better future for our community. Enjoy your summer.

From the Chief, Council,
Members and
Residents of the Cree Nation
and the Community of Nemaska.

Celebrate Nemaska 1977-1997

Let us honour the Old Poste
for it's warmth and memories

Let us celebrate Nemaska
for it's future and our dreams



Nellie's Story

Introduced by Daisy Ratt

When Nellie asked me to write the introduction to her personal story, I looked at her, puzzled, and wondered, "How can I write an introduction to a story that she is telling someone else?" Then the answer came. "Nellie, my friend, I am honored. Yes I will proudly introduce you as I know you."

Nellie M. Bearskin-House is a beautiful, Cree woman. She was born on the island of Fort George on July 23, 1956 to George and Charlotte (Pachano) Bearskin. She is the sixth of seven children. She has three beautiful children, Jody, Angela and Derek, and one granddaughter, Kyla, a sweet little angel.

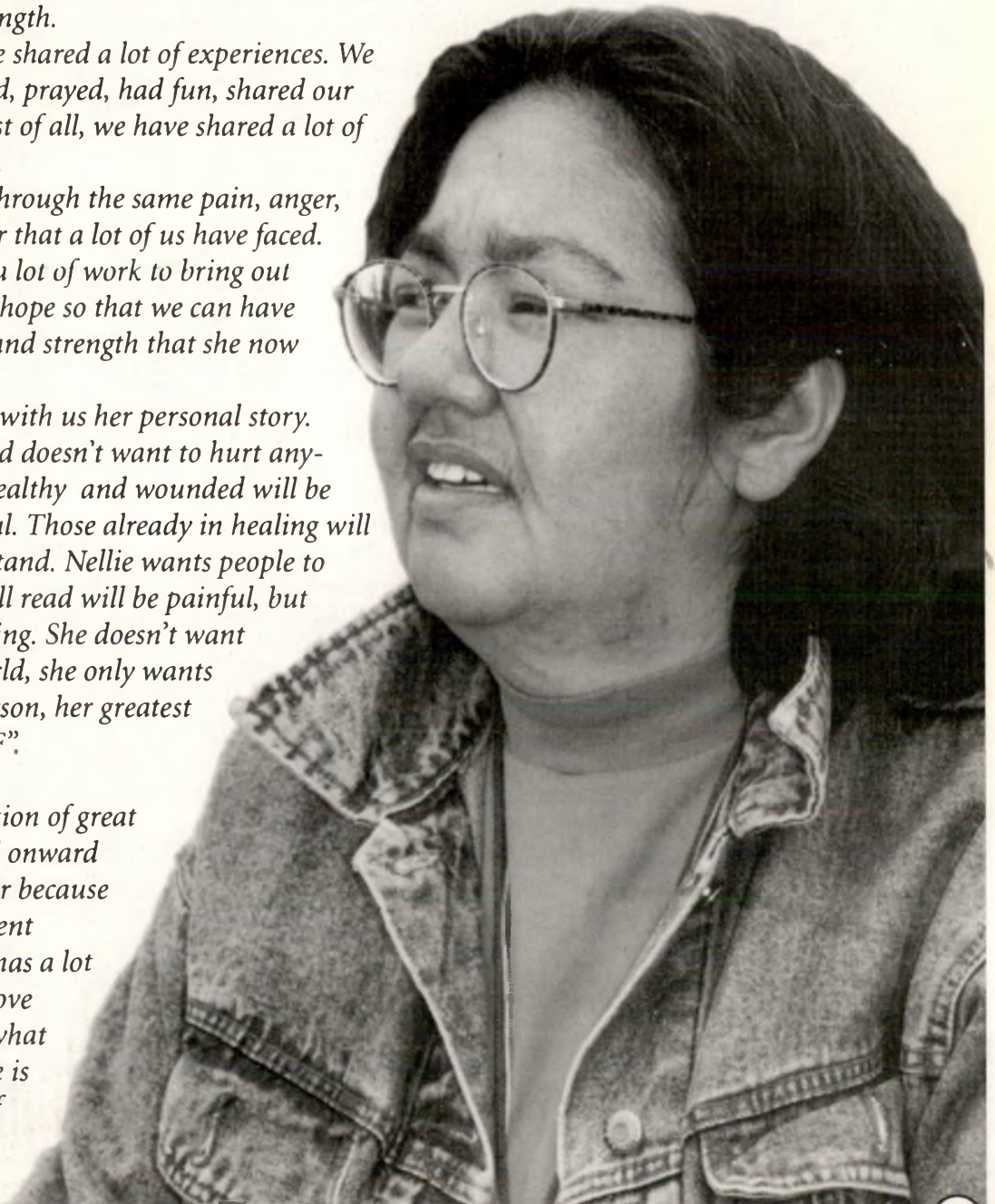
I have known Nellie for many years. We have become very close. After my mother's and sister's tragic accident, she was one of my friends who helped me build back my strength.

Together we have shared a lot of experiences. We have cried, laughed, prayed, had fun, shared our emotions, and most of all, we have shared a lot of our walks together.

Nellie has gone through the same pain, anger, loneliness, and fear that a lot of us have faced. And she has done a lot of work to bring out the light, love and hope so that we can have the same courage and strength that she now has.

Nellie will share with us her personal story. She means well and doesn't want to hurt anyone. Only the unhealthy and wounded will be angry and resentful. Those already in healing will accept and understand. Nellie wants people to heal. What you will read will be painful, but it will also be healing. She doesn't want to conquer the world, she only wants to conquer one person, her greatest enemy, "HERSELF".

The next generation of great grandchildren and onward won't have to suffer because "she will not be silent anymore." Nellie has a lot of courage, hope, love and light. This is what made her what she is now, a gift to all of us.... "Her Story".



...Nellie

I would like to share my personal story, my own journey of life. I would like to share it mostly for my children. I've started on this healing journey for the past three years and I now see the person I was, and the person I am today. My story is about a lot of pain, sorrow, and suffering, but it is also about a lot of triumphs. I share this story with my children because they suffered along with me. They too felt the pain and the hurt. I also share my story with the other women who are suffering. If sharing my story could help one woman, then, that is all I ask. I would like to start from the beginning.

I was born on July 23, 1956 on the island of Fort George in my family home. My sister told me I came into the world really loud, crying hard. My aunt tells me that I was a sick little baby. She remembers the autumn after my birth. We were going back on the land, and my mother had a strange expression on her face, like she thought I was going to die. We were going up the river and I had a fever that wouldn't go away. My grandfather said to the people, "We're going to look for a camp site and we are going to camp there until her fever goes down." We came to this clearing and we were going to make camp. My aunt remembers that as soon as the canoe stopped on the shore, my mother jumped out and ran up the hill with me. Then she heard her crying and screaming for my grandmother to come. Everybody went running up the hill. I had been all wrapped up and my mother had untied me. My aunt told me, "On your left arm pit, something came out". (She once asked me if I had a scar on my arm pit and I said, no). She said something came out of my armpit, through the skin, and after it came out, the fever went down. She said that to this day, people can't figure what came out of my armpit. And I remember when I was a small child, I used to tell people my tonsils came out of my armpit. They never figured out what it was.

I was also epileptic as a little girl. One summer, I had seizures constantly. I was around 2 yrs. old. My mother used to put a spoon in my mouth so that I wouldn't bite my tongue. I never was on medication. It was with me for a couple of years and then it went away by itself. I remember another time I almost died as a little girl. It was measles, I think, or scarlet fever. The whole community was infected and they had to quarantine people in the residential school or the hospital. The people were very sick and some were almost dying. I got really sick and so did my mother and some of my sisters too. They came to pick us up in this big tractor. I was lying on my mother's bed. This minister came in and he picked me up into his arms and took me outside. I remember looking at him with the blue sky. I had a high fever and was disoriented. My mother used to show me the bible with the picture of Jesus' face. I remember looking at the minister and thinking "This must be Jesus".

I remember those childhood diseases that I had and my mother taking care of me. I think that is why I was a spoilt little girl by my parents. I was sick and almost died. I have clear memories back to when I was only 3 yrs old, before I was in school. I was blessed to be born at that time. I was part of the last generation to see our traditions of

a nomadic life. We were raised on the land for ten months of the year and we would come into the community for two months in the summer. We lived in traditional dwellings. We were nomadic and went from camp to camp, traveling with sleds or canoes. Our diet consisted of food from the land; animals, berries, plant-life and fish. The only things we had from the other world were the basics like flour, sugar, lard and baking powder. Everything else was from the land. Our milk would be made from emmel broth. I remember in late August, early September, we would go upland and we would travel on the river of La Grande. Before we left, our mother would buy us little tams and cups that would be ours for the year. I was very mischievous. I used to bug my sister Sarah, who was older than me. One time, we were in the canoe going up the river to our trapline and I kept bugging her and she got mad at me. I grabbed her tam from her head and threw it in the river. We had to go back and get her hat.

I remember one year, it was in the winter. My father had not killed anything for a long time and we were running out of things to eat. One morning, my mother said to my sister Jane, "I'm going to go out hunting with your father. Maybe we can kill some small game". She gave Jane an empty flour bag she had saved. She said to

...Nellie

Jane, "Put that in some water and maybe there will be enough to make a small pancake for the kids. Do that in the middle of the day." Me and Sarah were outside playing. Jane was inside trying to make the pancake with Irene. It was the four of us. Irene was small then, a little baby. I kept asking Sarah, "Can I play with you? Can I play with you?" She kept saying, "Go away". And then she called me, and she said "OK, come and play with me". She had these little traps, these little muskrat traps. She had set one up, and said to me, "Put your thumb in the middle, we are going to play a little game". When I put my thumb in she let it go. She trapped my little thumb. I was screaming and crying so hard. My sister Jane came running out of the teepee and she was yelling, "Take that thing off her!" I was yelling and crying, but Sarah didn't want to take it off. I was in so much pain. But she was standing there laughing at me!

I have so many happy memories of being on the land. I can remember cold, rainy days when my parents would build our dwelling. We would sit there so cold and uncomfortable. Those were the only times I can remember not feeling good. Then they would finish our home and my mother did the boughs. The teepee would be up and she would get the fire going. She would put the tea on and the bannock and steak would be cooking. Everything was perfect. These memo-

ries come back so clearly, the togetherness and the comfort. Those were the times when I was most happiest. There were lots of hugs, kisses, and feelings of being part of a people and what was around you. I used to think we were the only people on the earth. It was so quiet and serene. I was living the life I was meant to have. I was who I was meant to be. With my people, I was living my own true identity as a First Nations person.

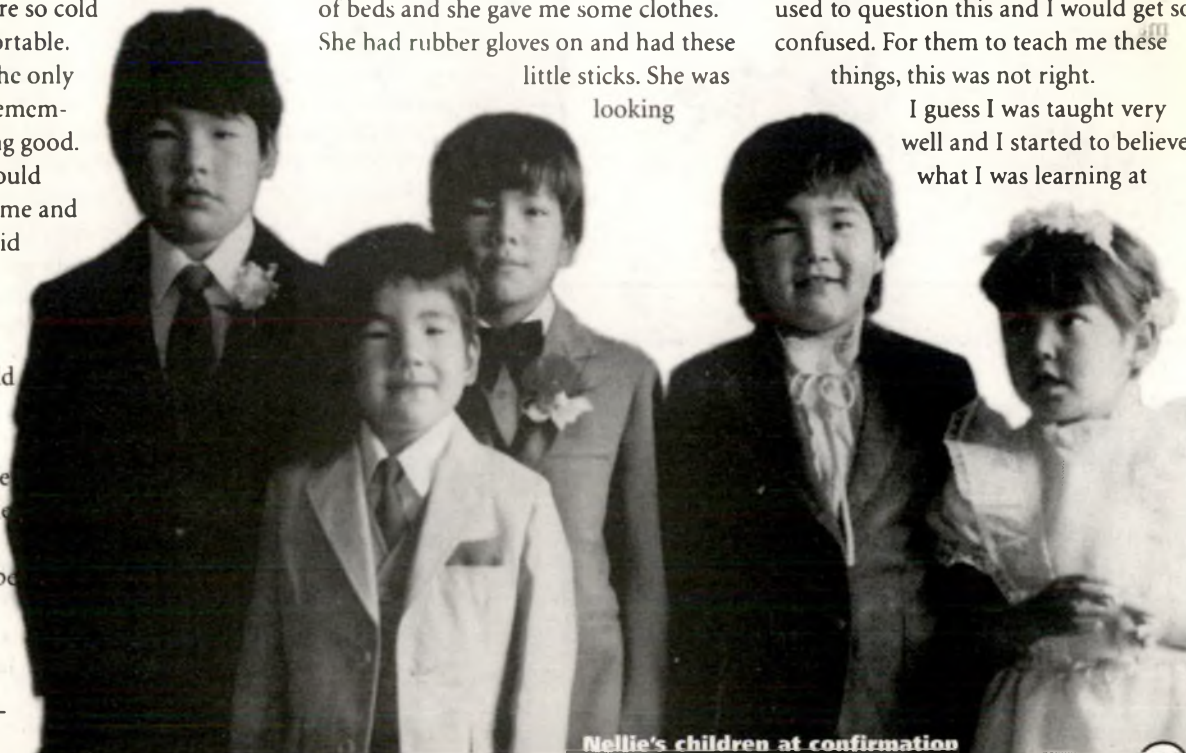
In the fall of 1962, I was put into the residential school. My mother took me for registration. I remember the day, I was so excited. It was something different. But it was so strange. I remember this woman in a gray uniform and her hair all done up. She had high heels on. I thought, "Who is this woman? What is she doing with me?" I remember my mother taking my hand, putting it into this woman's hand. My mother kept smiling at me. I remember the guard talking very fast and I didn't understand what she was saying. I thought, "Why is she talking in this strange language?" She took me into a big room where there were a lot of beds and she gave me some clothes. She had rubber gloves on and had these little sticks. She was

looking

really hard through my hair for something. She put this awful smelling stuff in my hair and it burned right to my skull. I was taken to this room where there was water coming out of the wall. I had never seen running water before, just in the river, or from a pail of water. She gave me a brush and she told me to wash myself and scrub really hard. It was hurting me. I was almost scrubbing off my skin. But she kept saying, "harder, harder". And I tried to scrub harder, but it was really hurting me. I kept wondering why she wanted me to scrub off my skin.

Those years in residential school, from when I was five to ten years old, we were in school from September to June. During this time, we were away from our parents and I couldn't talk or do the things I liked to do as a little girl. I used to get angry at my parents. They taught me another way of life, but this was so different and I was expected to learn this other way. Why did they teach me their way of life? It was so different compared to what I was now learning. I was told I shouldn't speak the language my parents taught me. I used to question this and I would get so confused. For them to teach me these things, this was not right.

I guess I was taught very well and I started to believe what I was learning at



Nellie's children at confirmation

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Maamuitaa
On CBC TV

July 5 and 6

"MoCreebec" is an acronym for a Cree resident of Moose Factory, Ontario. Join **Maamuitaau** as we talk with some of the residents and discover their own unique history and how they have had to struggle to maintain their lifestyle. Also on the show we feature story telling from a book written by John D. Visitor.

July 12 and 13

For the last three years Cree residents have been able to follow issues and events affecting them through the writings found in The Nation magazine. **Maamuitaau** talks with the owners about their early experiences and struggles in starting up the bi-weekly publication and the response so far from their readership. Also on the show a look at the launch of the James Bay Cree Fiddlers CD which took place in Montreal.

Watch Maamultaau:

Saturdays	06:58	SRC
Sundays	07:00	CBMT
	18:00	SRC
	(subject to change)	

CBC  **North**

...Nellie

school. That their language and ways were right and my language and ways were wrong. From five to ten years-old are the formative years for a child. What you are taught during those years, you come to believe. I started to become ashamed of who I was as a Native person, to the point where I used to think sometimes, "I have to become a white man, then I can find a perfect life." From five to ten years old, I was in the residential school. Later, I spent five more years in a non-Native home. During these ten years, I was in places where I was constantly told that I was wrong and that they were right. I began to believe those things and became ashamed of who I was. I would go home to my grandparents house where there was no running water and electricity. I would think, "They are so dirty, not clean". I guess what I am trying to say is that in order to be human, I felt I had to become a non-Native person. My oppression during those years made me believe that. And it is very hard for me sometimes to share that. I'm at the point in my life now where I am starting to understand what the residential school and the homes in the south did to me. When I was in my own community, I didn't act differently, I didn't care. But when I was in the south, I would act so differently. I wanted to fit in with that world. The way I walked, what I wore. I wanted to blend in. One time, when I was going to school in Rouyn, there were Natives in the area. I saw this Indian man coming around the corner, he was really drunk. I remember walking past him very fast. I didn't want to be near him, or see him. I was judging him because he was drunk. I started to develop the attitudes of the non-Native society. When I was with my own people back in the community, I would feel so out of place. I felt like I no longer belonged with my people. And I also felt that way in the non-Native society. And I wondered, "Well, what do I do now?" I used to go home for the

summers. My grandparents and the older people would say, "You walk and think like a white man". I used to question them. I would say, "But you put me there, my parents put me there". Those days were very confusing. I was born into one society, then put into another, where I was told my ways were wrong. You know, when you are at that age, it does a lot of damage to a young person's mind. During those years, I don't have good memories. There was a lot of confusion. Always wondering who I was.

On top of that, in 1966, when I was ten years old, my parents died in a very tragic plane crash on the way to their trapline. That event was so painful. It did a lot of damage to me inside. I remember everything we did that last summer together very clearly. That summer was good in so many ways. We were always together. I also remember little messages that were sent to us, maybe from the Creator, God. One summer afternoon, two birds came into the house. They circled around the inside of the house and then flew out. My Grandmother kept saying, "Get those birds out of the house, this is a bad omen." I remember my father used to dream a lot. There is one dream I particularly remember. One night, it was very dark. My father woke up with a scream. My mother woke up and lit the lantern. She asked him, "What's wrong, are you sick?" He told her about his dream. They didn't know that I was lying in bed awake, listening:

"We were inside the house. Outside the sky was blue and the sun was shining so bright and warm. The brightness and warmth came into the house and it was so nice. Then I heard a little plane coming closer to the house. When the plane circled around the house, the sun went away and the house started to get dark. I was in this darkness and I was trying to find the kids, but I couldn't. 'I couldn't feel the kids', he told my mother.

'I could only feel you'. Then I heard the plane leaving and the blue sky came back out. But then I could hear the plane coming back again, and I knew right away that I was going to get scared again. The sky would go dark and I wouldn't be able to find the kids."

That summer there were a lot of messages. Even the day before they were about to leave for the land. I heard a story from a woman, a good friend of my parents. She said my father came into her house that morning, had some tea and sat quietly for a long time. She asked him, "What's wrong?" He told her, "I had this dream last night that the plane I am going on crashed."

I really think these were messages from the Creator. In his own loving way, he gives us messages; how to look after ourselves, how to be safe. But I also know we have our own choice. He makes us make our own choices. To me, the Creator, God, is so loving, so good to us people.

That summer, we went back to the residential school. My parents were still around; they hadn't left yet to go back on the land. We would go back to my parents' house for the weekend. All that time, I used to feel so lonely and so sad when I went back to see my parents. I used to beg and plead with my mother, "I don't want to go back to school, I want to go back on the land, I want to go and live with you, just this one year." She used to say to me "You have to go to school, my little daughter, indanish", she would call me. "Look at your sister Irene, this is her first year, she is smaller, you have to be strong for her." We would always fight when it was time for her to take us back on Sunday evenings.

I had been in residential school for about four years already, and this behavior was not normal for me. Before I used to have fun in school with my friends. Now, when it was time to

...Nellie

go back, she would take me to the school. I would have my arms around her waist and would hold on so tightly she would have to pry my hands off her waist. She always used to wear dresses. She would laugh at me and say, "You're going to make my skirt fall down and people will laugh at me".

I remember after those weekends, my eyes would be so red, so swollen from crying. The supervisors would have to come and pry my hands from my mother. They would ask me, "You were never like this before, what's going on?" I could never answer. All I knew was that I felt so sad and lonely.

The day of October 27, 1966 really stands out in my life. I still remember it very clearly. It was the day that my parents were taken away from me. We were all in residential school and my parents were leaving to be on the land alone.

The day my parents left to go back on the land was crisp and cold. The sun was shining. They came and got me and my sisters from the play room at school. I remember that morning so well. I didn't want to look at my parents. They were all dressed up. I remember in my heart I felt "why are you leaving me?" I couldn't say anything, but it was in my heart. I didn't

know why this feeling of loneliness and sadness was so great. I had never felt like this before. I remember them coming to kiss me, but I couldn't look at them. I got angry at them, and asked "Why are you leaving me in this place". When they kissed me, I turned around quickly to go back. Before I went into the room, I looked back for a brief moment and saw them walk out the door. All I felt was such a great sadness. I knew in my heart, it was to be the last time I would ever see them.

The next day, we had a Halloween party in our classroom. I remember being dressed up as a little princess. I



Nellie, greeting the plane at Fort George, 1966

...Nellie

was playing near my teacher's desk. A man came into the room, and he said to my teacher, "You know the plane that took that couple out onto the land yesterday, well the plane didn't come back last night and people are starting to get worried". When I heard those words, I went to the back closet and hid among the coats. My teacher came and asked me "What are you doing, hiding in the closet?" I felt I had to pretend that I didn't know what was going on, so I came out and joined the party. But all that time, I kept thinking, "No, the plane will come back today, the plane will come back." After the party, we went back to the residential school. All the kids were looking at me and my sisters in a strange way, because they had heard the news of the plane. Their looks were so sad and pitiful. They didn't know that I had heard the conversation.

I kept thinking, "This is not true. The plane will come back. My parents are OK. They landed where they are supposed to go on the land. They made their camp." I remember going to bed that night and praying so hard to God to let my parents be OK. I used to silently cry in bed so the other girls wouldn't hear.

I remember being taken aside, me and my sisters, to the administration office. I knew in my heart what they were going to say. There was a catechist from the church, a respected Elder. His name was George. He told us, "They never found the plane or any wreckage. It's true that your parents are no longer part of this earth." I don't think I cried, I just looked directly at his face and I thought to myself, "He's lying to me. All adults lie". We were taken to my grandparents' house. There were so many people there crying. I kept wondering, "Why are these people so silly, this is not true". My grandmother was sitting at the table and she wanted me to sit with her. I remember snap-

ping at her, saying, "No, why are you telling us lies? Why are you crying so hard?" At those words she started crying harder. I can remember only bits and pieces during those days. People were so kind. They would give me tea, hugs and kisses. I was overwhelmed with all the attention that me and my sisters were getting. I remember the memorial service. Everyone was wearing black and somebody wanted to put a black kerchief on me. I said, "No, why are you putting this on me?" I remember going into the church, and there were so many people. As soon as we walked in, my sister Jane started crying. I remember thinking, "Why are you crying? Please don't cry so hard and embarrass us". It was a long service. At the end, we were told to line up so that people could come up and shake our hands. Many people were crying. I kept thinking, "Why are you crying? Why are you shaking my hand?" People kept looking at me in a strange way and they'd cry harder.

I hardly remember the year after my parent's death. When I came home after school finished, in June 1967, I saw that other parents had come back from the land. I used to wonder when my parents would come back. I used to run to the river bank and look to the eastern direction. Sometimes I would see a canoe and think, "Oh, those are my parents; they are here now." I used to sit there and look in one direction, waiting for my parents.

Finally, my grandmother came to get us. In her home, two of my uncles lived there with their own families. I remember going there that summer, wondering, "Where's my bed, where am I going to sleep?"

When I went to my grandmother's house that first day, I felt, "This is not my house. Should I get myself a cup of tea, or some soup?" I was shy and didn't feel that I belonged in the

home. My grandmother used to say to me, "You are old now, you have to wash your own clothes. You are on your own." I was 11 years old then.

That summer I wore the same clothes and washed them every day. I didn't want to unpack. I thought my parents would come back and we'd go back to our house. I felt so lost, so unloved, so confused, waiting for my parents to return. A month later, living in this home where I didn't want to touch things, or do things, I started to rebel. I don't know why. My aunt used to tell me, "Sweep up, clean the dishes, go get some water". I did it for a while, but after I stopped. I would just sit there and they would get mad at me. They started telling me, "You're such a bad girl, you talk back to people. That's why your parents died." I now understand their own anger and bitterness. My parents were a big part of the family. They had kept the family together. In her anger, my grandmother would say, "You are a lazy and stupid girl. You are good for nothing. All you do is sit and think." My grandfather was worse with me. All I heard that summer was "Your parents died and they are never coming back because you are such a bad girl. You don't want to listen and do the chores."

One day in August, me and my sisters were coming back from the store. There were many people down by the river bank, looking at a plane coming in. When we got to the bank, a lady grabbed me and said "Little girl, don't go down there." And I said, "Why?", because I could see all the people down there by the plane. She looked at me and started to cry. She held me so I couldn't squirm away from her. My grandmother was in bed that evening, crying. I asked my grandfather what was wrong with her. He told me not to talk. No one had told me that it was my parents bodies the plane had brought in, but I knew. So I

The Grand Council of the Crees and the Cree Regional Authority

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Annual General Assembly

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to be held in Ouje-Bougoumou
on August 12, 13 and 14, 1997.

The major topics to be discussed are land and traditional issues.



Grand Council of the Crees (of Quebec)
Grand Conseil des Cris (du Québec)

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CREE REGIONAL AUTHORITY
ADMINISTRATION RÉGIONALE CRIE



...Nellie

told my grandfather in a loud, angry voice, "The plane came in and they found my parents." And he got really upset with me and told me I would make my grandmother sick.

That summer I used to tell my grandfather, "I want to talk. I want to share what happened with my parents. Can you tell me what happened to my parents?" He used to shut me up and say, "You're a strange girl. Don't talk about those things and don't you ever talk about your parents in front of your grandmother, or you'll make her sick." I wanted so much to share my thoughts, feelings, and emotions about my parents. I had so many questions, "Are they coming back? Will I ever see them again? Will they be a part of my life?" All these questions were like an enormous weight on me. No one would talk to me or answer my questions. I got angry and started to rebel. I felt I was a burden and so I wouldn't eat for days. I remember me and my sisters, we didn't have beds, we used canvas or leftover blankets on the floor. It was like this every night. Sometimes I used to stay out late with my friends and come home in the morning. I'd sleep in someone's bed. I never felt kisses or hugs anymore. No more support or encouragement from an adult. I used to cry myself to sleep. One night I cried so loud, yearning for something. My grandfather came into the room and said, "Please don't cry, you're making your grandmother very sad." I remember talking back to him for the first time. I said, "Well I am sad, too. Can I cry too?" I started spending more time with my friends. Being with them was better than being at home.

The following fall, I was put in a kind, loving home in the south with a really nice couple. My years there were good. We had attention, but deep down, I always realized that these were not my parents. I started to fantasize that my parents were still alive. I used

to dream they had found this couple on the land who were lost and disoriented. They were bringing them back to the community. I had that dream for years, even into my adult years. My need for my parents got worse when I became an adult and had children.

I had my first drink when I was thirteen years old. It was alcohol. I remember how it burned, but when it got to my stomach, it made me feel so good. I remember thinking, "Finally, here's something that makes me feel good." I started to drink very heavily.

When I got to be fifteen, I used to dream about having a man in my life, a special boy who I could talk to about all my pain and loneliness. I wanted a home, a safe haven that would be all mine! I had a lot of boyfriends when I was growing up, but I never shared my feelings with them. I used to think, "I have to be strong and perfect so they will love me". During those years, I used to drink a lot, but I always had common sense about how to look after myself. I never became intimate with these boys. I used to feel that if they were inside me, they would feel my hurt and sadness, and they would become sad themselves.

In Dec. 1972, I saw my future husband for the first time. I didn't know who he was. When I saw him, I got this good feeling and thought, "I'm going to marry that man." We got together a couple of weeks later. I felt so good with him that I didn't want to spend a moment apart. I thought he would take away all my pain, all my problems. I started to spend more time with him away from my grandmother's home. There was something different about him. He seemed stronger and knew the ways of the world. We drank a lot. He was the first boy with whom I became intimate. I was almost 17 when I had my first sexual encounter. I conceived a child.

My first son Jody was born on Jan. 12, 1974. Even before his birth, my relationship was going from bad to worse because of the drinking. Even then I thought, "This is wrong. This is not what I want. I need someone to hug me, to wipe away my tears". I couldn't share my feelings with him. I knew at that point I could not marry this man because of our relationship. There was too much control, maybe on my part, maybe on his part. When Jody was born, it was like Christmas back on the land. It felt so good. I thought, "I did something wonderful, I brought a life into this world, gee, I'm not so bad after all." I had made this precious little baby who would love me. Finally, someone who would love me! When my son was born, I didn't know about childbirth. I thought he was going to come out of my stomach. I thought, "How is my stomach going to open?" Nobody taught me about my body. I was so unprepared.

We weren't married then, but we lived together. I remember bringing my little baby to my in-law's place. I felt that my own family didn't want anything to do with me. My relationship with my husband was getting worse. I felt so controlled, like I couldn't do things right. I also felt from the adults that I was supposed to know how to be a parent, and what to do. But no one taught me those things, or encouraged me. I learned these things by myself. I used to be criticized a lot, but when I became a mother, it got worse. One time, when I was still breastfeeding Jody, I went to a social gathering. When I got back, my breasts were leaking through my parka. I always had this feeling that people were saying that I was a bad mother. No one gave me advice about these things. During those years after Jody's birth, I started to feel really bad about myself. I felt so guilty that I was a bad mother. During those years, all I got were put-downs. Since the death of my parents, I

...Nellie

don't remember people saying, "You did good Nellie". There were no pats on the back. My self-esteem was nowhere to be found.

Our relationship got worse. My husband was a very angry man, and I got the brunt of his anger. I was physically, emotionally and verbally abused. When he drank, my husband got worse. I started to develop a fear of him. I used to think, "This is my life. There's no hope for me. I'd rather die."

My only daughter was born on November 15, 1976. During my pregnancy with her, the violence got worse. I used to be so silent. I was so tolerant and patient. I used to pray, "OK, tomorrow it will be better, he'll be a changed man." Some nights, I would be sleeping in bed with my babies and I would get a punch in the eye. I would wake up so fast, and he would criticize me for having French boyfriends. He would call me a whore, a bitch.

When my youngest son was born on Aug. 14, 1978. I thought this would improve our relationship and that my husband would love me if I had another son. I realize now that I used my children for my own fears. I used their lives to make me happy. During those years, when they were young, my children saw a lot of alcohol and violence in the home. I felt so bad. Even up to a couple of years ago, every time I would look at their baby pictures, I would cry. I used to think, "What did I do to these kids?" Because of my own fears and insecurities, I used my children as shields. Sometimes my husband would come home drunk and wake me up and start yelling. I used to cry to wake up my kids. I thought if the kids were awake, he wouldn't touch me. Oh no, that wasn't true. I think back now of what I did to my kids. They couldn't say anything, they were so small and vulnerable. It still hurts so much to think of what I did to them.

And my anger! I used to get so angry at my husband for all the things he did to me, that I would take it out on my kids. I physically hurt my children because I couldn't say anything to my husband. I was so afraid of him. I've been punched, pushed, kicked. I remember so many black eyes. I even stopped caring at one time. I would just go out. People knew about the relationship. I was embarrassed sometimes. When my husband drank, I used to take my kids to my family's home for protection. People thought I was making trouble. I would try to be so brave and strong. The irony was that I didn't feel any support from anyone. Instead, I was considered a trouble-maker.

Even though people were talking about me, I eventually said to myself, "I have to protect my children. What am I going to do?" One time I took my kids into the basement, and we made a bed under the stairs. My daughter had a bad cold and there was a draught in the basement. When my husband came into the house, my son kept begging my daughter, "Please don't cough, please don't cough". My daughter wanted to cough so badly, but we didn't want my husband to hear us, so we put our hands over her mouth. She would make these little choking sounds because she needed to cough.

Through the years, I started thinking about leaving my husband. It was not a normal environment for kids. There was so much violence and drinking." My house was used as a bar and a whorehouse. My kids saw so much of that life, and they still talk about it today. What makes me so sad is that when they were young, I should have had more strength and courage. That's my biggest regret: My fear totally controlled me.

I started to feel more brave. I went to the bank to get housing, an apartment,

or even just one room where we could be safe. People's attitudes were, "Well, you made your choice, now you stay with it." The whole council knew my story. I used to think people thought I was making a fuss. When my son got older, he too started to feel brave. One day, when he was thirteen, he said to his father, "No more, please no more". He got pushed down the stairs. But he kept getting up.

I was married from June 1974 until Feb. 1996. For those years, all I knew was fear, being controlled, violence, drinking, anger. Now I know that I put so much on the kids. I used to let my house go. I wouldn't clean it up. I used to think, "The drunks have taken over my home, if I clean it up, they will just come back tomorrow." I know people used to say I was a poor housekeeper. But it was no longer my home.

When my youngest son was not even a year old, I went into a bad depression. I wanted to kill myself. I thought if I killed myself, people would come to the funeral, and give me the attention and support I needed. But I thought, "Who's going to love my kids and take care of them?" Because of my kids, I couldn't kill myself. Instead, I went to see a doctor. I started talking to her about what was happening in my life. She was the first person who I could really talk to. She said, "I'm going to put you in the hospital for a couple of days." In the hospital, all I could do was sleep. I couldn't even look after my kids.

I went back home, but nothing had changed. Again, I almost killed myself. I was going to shoot myself in the head. Again, I thought about my kids, so I went back to the doctor, and begged, "I want to die so badly, please give me something that will make me sleep forever." I ended up in the hospital for a couple of days. My husband came to see me and thought I was physically

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It feels good.”**



...Nellie

sick. During that depression, my kids were older. I went to social services and told them I couldn't look after my kids. My eldest son went to a friend's home, a very good home. My daughter wanted to stay with a family who lived on the land, but she ended up at her grandmother's. I don't know where my youngest son went.

When I look back, it really hurts to think of what my kids went through. My biggest regret is I was not strong enough to be a nurturing and loving mother. I tried to give them a normal life, but there was so much drinking, so many things that were wrong. I know things happened to my kids when there was drinking in the home, that they were harassed by drunks. And they were so small. I would be brave sometimes and kick people out. I would get more shit from my husband, but my kids had to go to school in the morning so I had to be strong.

You know, I don't regret everything in that part of my life. My husband taught me how to be independent and strong. He gave me three beautiful children, who mean the whole world to me. He is a part of them. For eighteen of the twenty-two years I was married, I was the sole provider. The only times I didn't work was when I was pregnant or breastfeeding. I don't regret that. I liked working and after all those years, this is who I am. I am a woman who is very strong and independent. I do things for myself and don't ask for help. I think everything is possible. If I can do the impossible today, tomorrow will be easier.

I remember the day I threw away my wedding ring. I thought to myself, "Why am I wearing this ring? I couldn't answer that question. I flushed the ring down the toilet. If I couldn't separate myself from my husband physically, I could do it in my heart." It felt so good to throw away my ring. In

my heart I was not married. I was the only one who knew it, but it sure felt good! I lived in fear of my husband for fifteen solid years. Every day I would wonder, "What will happen today, will he drink, will he harass me or hurt me? Will I feel the pain today?" For fifteen solid years I lived in constant fear.

The summer of 90 or 91, I admitted myself into a woman's shelter in Val d'Or. I remember the day I went in. I felt so sad and alone. I knew I needed help. Before, I used to see a lot of doctors and psychologists who I would talk to. But talking was not enough. In the woman's shelter, I said, "This is real. This is my reality. I am an abused wife." The day I went into the shelter, I slept for 24 hours. I met a counselor and she invited me to her cabin. I asked her why? She said, and this was the first time I had ever heard this, "Nellie, when I am around you and when I share things with you, you make me feel good. She said that she normally didn't invite people to her cabin, but that I was special. And that was the first time in my life that someone had told me, "Nellie, you're special." I stayed at the center for a couple of weeks. I started to think and reflect on my life and within myself. Hearing all these kind words from this woman, I began to think, "Gee, I'm not so bad after all."

I knew I had to live with my husband when I got back home. I thought I was going to go insane. But I refused to go into a depression or leave the community. I didn't want to uproot my kids from their family, friends and school. In previous years, I used to run off to school just to get away from my husband. I used to drag the kids with me. This time, I made a decision: I was no longer going to talk to him. For five years, until this past March, I did not communicate with my husband in any way, even though we lived in the same house. My friends would say, "Nellie, how can you do that? How can you live

with him and be silent?" But I continued. It was very painful for my kids and they started to drink heavily.

In the spring of 89, my first house burnt. Me and my kids were away in Timmins and my husband was alone in the house. My house completely burned to the ground. And last year in June, my second house burned. This time my kids were all at home. Both times I was not in the community. I was overwhelmed. And then this past year in the fall of 1996, there were the sexual abuse disclosures within my own family. It was one thing after another. So much pain came back with these disclosures. Again I withdrew. For days I would lay in bed in the dark, wishing for death. There was no support from the community. Me and my family were so alone, battling this monster we call sexual abuse. We were shunned. People were so silent..

In June, after my house burnt, I knew that I had to do something with myself. All these bad things could not keep happening. I thought, "Maybe I'm causing all this. Maybe all the negative things in me are attracting other negative things." There was so much pain in my body. I started to work on myself. I started walking. So much stress left my body. I wanted to live a different life from my old self. I wanted to live a long life for my grandchildren and run after them. I didn't want to end up in a wheelchair.

Walking was very painful at first. I developed blisters and would cry and scream. For so many years I had stored all my garbage in my body. It was time to clean my body. For the first two months, I was constantly in pain. Even my toenails were coming off! I realized that it was my dead self that I was losing. New ones would grow. I didn't give up. Somewhere inside of me, there was a will to go on and that felt so good. It was a turning point for me.

...Nellie

Before I used to eat for protection. I put things in my body to relieve, for just a moment, the pain or the stress.

I started to look within me. Last June, I started thinking about my Native spirituality. I met a lot of medicine people and they let me share my story with them. When I meet a medicine person, a minister, or even children, I learn from them, but I only take what is good, what is comfortable, what I understand and need. When I meet someone, I question myself. I say, "OK, Nellie, why is this person put in your path?" There is a teaching. Now I realize that when people are put in my path, there are things in me that are supposed to come out.

Through my own healing, I try to combine psychology and Native spirituality. There are teachings for me on both sides.

I've been called many names over the years. Those names don't hurt me anymore. I know now who I am and I don't have to explain myself to anyone. In me, there is a strong, independent, loving, kind woman, and that's all that matters. Through my own healing, I learned to have a better understanding and love for my person.

The biggest part of my story is for my children. I want them to know the kind of woman I am, and the kind of mom I wanted to be. I need to be there for them. By working on myself, I can now love my kids genuinely from my heart. For the first time in my life, I can now go and hug my kids. It feels good.

I have changed so much. Both inside and outside. I love myself and know that I am strong. I'm not saying I won't have any problems; life needs balance. But I am able to accept and to cope with problems now, because inside me, I am a different person. By putting my story on paper for all people to read, I

am letting myself go. Sharing my story five years ago would have been so embarrassing. But today, I have the strength. I share my story for others.

Today, I still feel good about myself. I know that healing is a lifetime process and that life is never perfect, but now I can try my hardest.

In telling my story, I have a lot of respect for people. This is my journey of life. If people are hurt from my story, I offer my sincere apologies. But I had to do this, to put my story down, to come forward. I need to step forward, not back.

My story is dedicated to my three children Jody George, Angela Bertha, and Derek Willy Daniel, and to my grand-daughter Kyla. I apologize for all those years of pain.

My story would not have been possible without the love and support of the following people: My parents, my sisters Irene Bearskin-House and Sarah Bearskin-Louttit. Also: George Louttit, Larry House, Greta Lameboy, Irene Pachanos, James Bobbish, Lillian Pitawanakwab, Calvin Sault, Eva Louttit, Wabimeguil (Betty Albert-Lincez), Danielle and Matthew Mukash, Joyce Helmer, Rhonda and Catherine, Laura Bearskin, Stella, Williamish, Sarah, and especially to Daisy Ratt, my very special friend. - Nellie

Nellie told me her story one recent weekend on the Island of Fort George. Thank you Nellie, for having the courage and strength to share your story with all of us.

— Rhonda Sherwood

IF I HAD MY CHILD TO RAISE OVER AGAIN

If I had my child to raise all over again, I'd build self-esteem first and the house later.

I'd finger paint more and point the finger less.

I would do less correcting and more connecting.

I'd take my eyes off the watch and watch with my eyes.

I would care to know less and know to care more.

I'd take more hikes and fly more kites.

I'd stop playing serious and seriously play.

I would run through more fields and gaze at more stars.

I'd do more hugging and less tugging.

I'd see the oak tree in the acorn more often.

I would be firm less often and affirm much more.

I'd model less about the love of power And more about the power of love.

— Diane Loomans

100-BIRTHS

We would like to wish a happy 2nd birthday to our sweet, funny, and adorable daughter Kara-Lynn Kavena on May 17, 1997. You have brought us so much happiness and laughter into our lives. We

will always love you with lots of love, hugs and kisses, Mommy and Daddy (Karen and Kevin).

A belated birthday wish going out to my sister Pamela Georgekish on April 16. Happy 16th birthday! Hope you had a great time on your birthday. Hope all your dreams come true! With love, your sister Melinda Georgekish.

I want to wish a happy birthday to my dad Gilbert on May 5 and also to my mom Linda on May 19. Happy birthday to both of you and we love you both very much. From your sons Gilbert, Greg and Sidney-James.

I would like to wish a happy b-day to a very special friend of mine Eleanor Gull who's birthday is on May 3. I wish you all the best in life and have a wonderful birthday from friend always Renee.

Happy belated birthday to my friend Mary Sealhunter in Chisasibi. I'm sorry I'm late. Hope you had a blast on your birthday! Best wishes and many more to come. Take care girl! and don't party too much. Miss ya! From your friend in Waskaganish. Guess Who?

Birthday greetings going out to a special but funny uncle John Mianscum on May 17. When you approach a person you sure know how to make their day a happy one. This b-day I hope to make your day a funny one. Take care and God bless. From your niece Margo M.C. in O.J.

Birthday wishes going out to Varley Mianscum on May 11. don't think about the P-word (party) and think about the E-word (education). We want to wish you the best for the year ahead and have a safe day. From all the employees at Casey's (O.J.)

I wanna wish a happy 2nd Birthday to a sweet little girl with a cute nose, Kara-Lynn Lavena on May 17. Hope you have a wonderful birthday sweetie. With lots of love and kisses, Jo-anne M.

Happy belated 1st birthday to my sweet adorable niece Ashlyn Melanie on April 23rd. And also a belated birthday wish to my brother Floyd on the 25th with love, Anita, Cal and Meyaubin (Wask).

A birthday wish going out to my cousin in Nemaska Diane D. Moar on May 8 in Nemaska, Diane D. Moar on May 8, my

friend Charlene Gilpin on May 12 in Chisasibi and to my big brother Lawrence Katapatuk (Junior) on May 14 in Waskaganish. Last but not least my cousin in Waswanipi Eddie HappyJack (Junior) on the 23rd of May. Happy birthday to you all. Hope you have fun! With love and friendship "Katapuk" (in Wask.)

300-PERSONALS

So how have you been the one and only Cindy Crawford of Mistissini Lake? I was so delighted to hear from you O thought I died of boredom. Anyway, I will be swinging by your area after I am back from L.A. You know what Brad is like when I try to leave. Maybe we could do lunch and perhaps swing by the Super Club and cut a rug as they say. Well, adieu, don't forget to call and tell that handsome devil Dean that I cannot wait to see him as well. All my love, Shania E. Twain xoxoxoxo

I'd like to say hello to Judy House M.M-Hunter in Chisasibi also to Sheila Tomatuk in Eastmain. So how have you been there these days girls? Well, I've been doing well and okay. I have been busy these days. I wanna hear from you girls From a friend Bill K. in Wask. Also hi to my sisters in Moose Factory Sarah, Rita, Barbara, also to my brothers Wayne - Howard, T. Call me sometimes eh! I love you all even though I don't hardly see you at all. I miss you as a brother and sister, with love your sister BHK (Wask)

I'd like to wish a happy mother's Day to my mom Sophia and to my sisters and sisters-in-law from with love Brenda. I would like to wish a happy birthday my sis Doris Small on May 3rd. Hope you had a great Birthday! With love your sis Brenda S. in Waskaganish.

I would like to wish a Happy Mothers Day to my mother Eva and especially my mother in law Christine Gull and my sisters Mannette, Caroline, Karen plus my sisters in law Dorothy G., Helen W., Linda C., Lillian N and my nieces Emma N., Many G., especially Sabrina. She is part of the family too. Happy Mother's Day ladies. May the Lord bless you ladies in the special way too. Sister in Christ Diane Gull.

500-MISC.

This special message goes out to our caring and loving mother. There were



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3rd edition

Theme:

Impulsion

September 12 to September 14, 1997

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1. Amateur and professional artist, 18 years and over, residing in the Nord-du-Québec or Abitibi-Témiscamingue regions
2. Paintings of all styles shall be accepted but the theme "Impulsion" must be respected.
3. Size of paintings:
from 11" x 13" (excluding frame)
to 24" x 30" (excluding frame)
4. One painting per artist dated 1996 or 1997

DEADLINE

1. Registration: by August 15, 1997

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1. PROFESSIONAL

1st Prize	\$1,000
2nd Prize	\$800
3rd Prize	\$600
2. AMATEUR

1st Prize	\$500
2nd Prize	\$400
3rd Prize	\$300
3. NORD-DU-QUÉBEC

Professional	\$1,000
Amateur	\$500

 (restricted to artists of Nord-du-Québec)
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CLASSIFIEDS

times we should have said I love you, mother Those words weren't always heard. But now we are saying WE LOVE YOU AND THANK YOU for loving us. we'll always be grateful for everything you have done for us, and we will always love you. All of our thoughts and love are with you on this special day. May this day be special for you because you deserve it. Although you're in Montreal, you'll be in our thoughts. HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY. With lots of love. Russell and Sophia xoxo.

To our mom Helen Mianscum on Mothers Day. To one who bears the sweetest name and adds luster to the same. Long life to her for there's no other who takes the place of our dear mother on this mother's day we remember the happiness you have brought to those around you. And may you always look forward to the future. Knowing... in the world of mothers you're one of the very best! Have a Happy Mothers day and also happy belated birthday to you on April 28. Your 60th now mom! Relax a little! We love you so dearly. Love always, husband John, children Hattie, Rusty, Bella, Mary, Rene, Dave, Judy, Varley and Grandchildren Lorna, Renee, Nigel, Amelia, Tyrone and Juanita.

I would like to wish my mom Margaret in Montreal, a Happy mother's Day. Hope this day will be a special one for you. There were times that I have disappointed you (O.K., a lot of times!) What can I say, we all make mistakes. You helped me get through hard times, you still do and I love, than you for it. There were moments of joy to remember, moments of laughter and friendship, caring closeness, understanding and most of all LOVE. I possibly couldn't ask for a better mom. With even more love than you have no, Sophia xoxo.

This one goes out to my uncle boy de da in Mistissini. I would like to thank-you from my little heart for taking care of me, while mommy and daddy are at work. I miss you boy de da. Love, from your nephew Brendan R. Jimiken. P.S. - mommy misses you too.

Mom. You probably are my best friend for you accept me for who I am. and I always go to you for advice and help but

also just for good conversation. Sure we've had good and bad times, but there's never been a problem so large that can question the basic nature of our relationship. Happy mother's Day to my wonderful and terrific Mom Mary (Moar) Katapatuk (Wask) from your daughter who admires you a lot. Anita Rose Katapatuk (Wask) Luv ya Mom xoxoxo

Happy belated birthday to Georgew Wapachee on May 21, 1997. I wish your dreams come true on Your special day. You're a very special person to me and I

love you. From Daisy.

Happy 21st birthday Jenny (Pooh) Bearskin. I hope you didn't think I would forget your most important day of the year which is on May 30. I hope to see you and the girls very soon. Your crazy cousin Beeligoom number 1.

Happy 21st birthday again to Boysh Wadden on June 9. Take it easy. With love, your boys and grandchildren.

Birthday greetings going out to Hilda

Gilpin on June 22nd and Diane Mayappo on June 25th. From Mary, Thomas and family. Eastmain.

Happy birthday to DGJr on June 28th (the person who gave me my name (RMI) Come visit me more often okay!

Happy belated birthday to Brittany Mary Lee Gilpin of Eastmain. She will be turning eight years old on June 17th. We hope you have fun on your birthday and we love you very much. From Mary Thomas and family.



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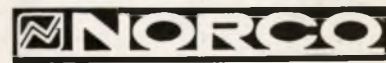
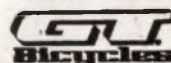
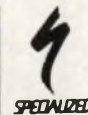
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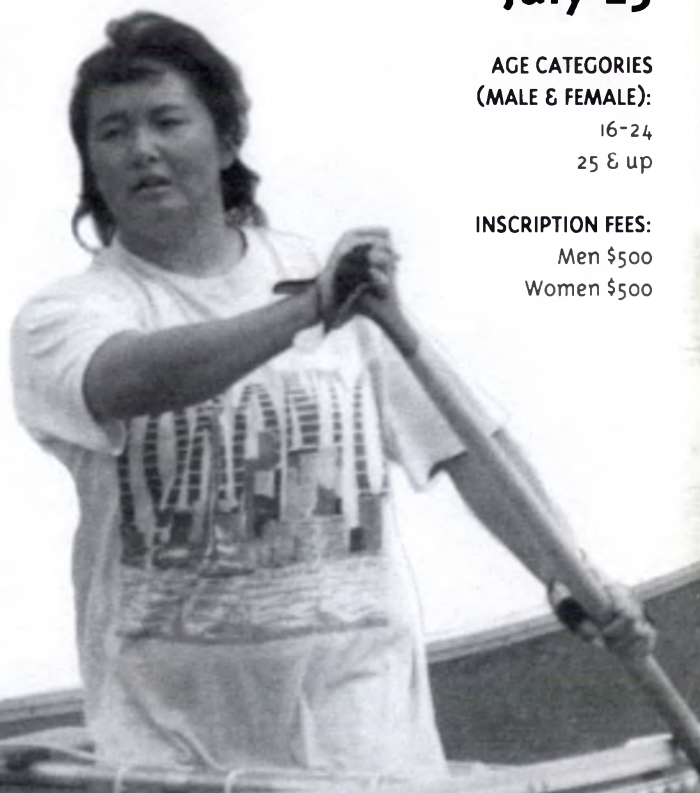
DISTANCES:	Men	Women
Swimming	1Km	1Km
Cycling	20Km	15Km
Portage	1Km	0.5Km
Canoeing	2Km	1Km
Running	10Km	7.5Km
Total	34Km	25Km

PRIZES:	Men	Women
1st	\$3000	\$3000
2nd	2500	2500
3rd	2000	2000
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